

Voting Process  
SRC\_003  
Rev. #: 1  
Date: August 24, 2004  
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**Standard Operating Procedure  
Voting Process for Acceptance of New Standard Submitted to NELAC**

**NELAC Standards Review Committee  
FINAL**

Reviewed by NELAC Standards Review Committee:

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Date

Reviewed by NELAC Board of Directors:

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Date

Approved by NELAC:

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August 24, 2004

Date

## **1.0 Purpose**

The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is to outline the process used to vote on proposed standard submitted to the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) Standards Review Committee (SRC).

## **2.0 Applicability**

This SOP applies to the voting process used by the NELAC SRC to determine if a standard submitted by a Standards Development Organization (SDO) will be presented to NELAC for a vote.

## **3.0 Summary**

A SDO presents proposed standard to the SRC chairperson. The proposed standard goes through a successful Completeness Review and a Technical Review as detailed in the Standards Review Process. The SRC chairperson presents the proposed standard to the SRC as an agenda item. A simple majority is required to move the proposed standard to a full quorum vote. A final version is presented for comment and vote at a subsequent scheduled meeting. A vote is taken by roll call of those in attendance. Absent SRC members have two weeks to vote by an official ballot provided by the SRC chairperson. All votes regarding the final consideration of proposed standard requires a full quorum of the SRC membership for the vote to be considered valid and official.

## **4.0 Definitions**

### **4.1 Simple Majority**

A simple majority is defined as greater than 50% of the SRC Membership. For example, if the SRC consists of 22 members, a simple majority is defined as 12 or more members. Simple majority requirements do not incorporate vacant positions into the requirements calculations unless the number of vacant positions exceeds 20% of the SRC membership. If the number of vacancies exceeds 20%, the vacant positions must be filled, or the size of the SRC must be formally changed by the NELAC before the SRC is allowed to vote.

### **4.2 Full Quorum**

A full quorum is defined as a minimum of 90% of the SRC membership. Full quorum requirements do not incorporate vacant positions into the requirements calculations unless the number of vacant positions exceeds 20% of the SRC membership. If the number of vacancies exceeds 20%, the vacant positions must be filled, or the size of the SRC must be formally changed by the NELAC before the SRC is allowed to vote.

### **4.3 Meeting**

A meeting is defined as coming together of the SRC. A meeting may be a physical gathering, conference call, or other electronic means that allows for free, timely exchange of ideas.

#### **4.4 Negative Vote**

A negative vote is defined as an "Against".

#### **4.5 Failed Vote**

A failed vote is defined as a negative vote by a NELAP accrediting authority based on a conflict with existing statutory requirements or regulatory requirements of the NELAP AA or one that does not have a two-thirds majority of those not abstaining in a full quorum vote.

### **5.0 Procedure**

#### **5.1 Receiving Proposed Standard**

A SDO presents proposed standard to the SRC chairperson. The proposed standard goes through a successful Completeness Review and a Technical Review. The SRC Chairperson presents the proposed standard to the SRC as an agenda item.

#### **5.2 Review and Action**

The SRC will discuss the best course of action for the proposed standard and recommendation from the Technical Review. A simple majority will move the proposed standard back to Technical Review for additional action or forward to a full quorum vote.

#### **5.3 Discussion and Comment**

Discussion will continue until a simple majority determines that the recommended standard is ready for a full quorum vote.

#### **5.4 Full Quorum Vote**

At a subsequent meeting, the recommendation to send the proposed standard forward to the NELAC or return to the SDO is presented for final comment and full quorum vote.

SRC members who are absent, during the meeting in which a full quorum vote is made, have two weeks to place a vote electronically, by FAX, or hard copy on an official ballot provided by the SRC chairperson. Electronic votes must contain the electronic signature of the SRC member. A decision by a simple majority is required to initiate the full quorum vote. The vote is not considered valid unless a full quorum has been met within the designated two week period. If a full quorum fails to vote within the two-week period, the vote is considered invalid and the issue must be presented again for vote according to the process that begins with Section 5.1.

#### **5.5 Voting Options Full Quorum**

5.5.1 The voting options available to the SRC are "For", "Against", "Abstain". If no vote is received, it is recorded as "Absent".

5.5.2 If an SRC member is a representative of a National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP) accrediting authority (AA), that member must vote either "For" or "Against".

## **5.6 Voting Requirements for Presentation to the NELAC**

- 5.6.1 A passing vote must come from a full quorum. A passing vote requires a two-thirds majority of those not abstaining.
- 5.6.2 Proposed standard receiving a failed vote shall not be presented by the SRC to the NELAC with a recommendation to adopt.
- 5.6.3 Proxy voting is not allowed, however, committee members representing a NELAP AA, with prior approval of the committee chairperson, may designate alternates. The affected SRC member(s) must provide a minimum of one day's notice to the committee chairperson to accept alternates. Non-AA voting members may not provide alternates for voting purposes.
- 5.6.4 The SRC will present the proposed standard with recommendations for voting at the NELAC annual meeting. These recommendations will be as follows:
  - 1) the standard will be recommended for NELAC approval without further modification;
  - 2) the standard will be recommended for NELAC approval subject to minor changes being made by the SDO; or
  - 3) the standard is considered unsuitable and will not be recommended for approval, if brought to vote.
- 5.6.5 If, during the voting session at the NELAC annual meeting, NELAC does not adopt a proposed standard, the SRC will prepare a report of the reasons to the extent known and return it to the SDO within 30 days of that annual meeting.

## **5.7 Recording of the Full Quorum Vote**

The vote of the SRC is recorded on a member-by-member basis and the tally attached to the final version of the standard. The SRC chairperson must confirm and document that a full quorum was met at the time of completion of the vote.

## **5.8 Failed Votes**

- 5.8.1 Failed votes must be addressed before submitting proposed standard to the NELAC. Each of the following steps must be taken in order:
  - 5.8.1.1 The SRC shall conduct further discussion of proposed standard; and
  - 5.8.1.2 Those SRC members casting a negative vote shall present written rationale that will explain the reason(s) for their negative vote; and
  - 5.8.1.3 The SRC shall obtain additional information from the SDO to further explain the rationale for proposed standard; and
  - 5.8.1.4 The SRC chairperson shall return the proposed standard to the SDO with recommendation(s) to mitigate or eliminate the area of disagreement.

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## **6.0 Quality Control**

The NELAC Board of Directors and the NELAP Director will assess and report on the performance of the SRC voting process annually.

## **7.0 References**

NELAC Constitution and Bylaws approved June 2003.

Chapter 1 NELAC Standards approved June 2003.